



The Weekly Page

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Pages Learn About Legislature



Big ideas in government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three “big ideas” for a representative government: governing is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day. As they participated in daily discussions, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding around the concepts deepened. On Friday, they wrote about one of the big ideas to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.

Reps want sooner executions

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Kyle McCroskey and Riley Mitchell introduced House Bill 1000, which addresses the issue of death penalty costs. “The bill is a good one because it will save the state money,” said Rep. McCroskey. Almost all



people facing death cannot afford their own attorney. The state must assign them two public defenders and pay for the cost of the lawyers for the other side, too. At the trial level the death penalty trials cost about \$470,000 compared to a trial without the death penalty, which costs between \$47,000-

70,000. “Police chiefs in a recent study said the death penalty is the least efficient use of taxpayers’ money,” said Rep. Mitchell. If this bill becomes law, all people given the death penalty sentence must complete their appeals within four years. By the fifth year, the execution must take place.

Pages write bills, hold mock hearings

Pages worked individually or in small groups to write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. Criteria for making a legislative solution work was discussed before students selected issues to research and develop. Then they used bill templates on class computers to formulate official-looking documents in preparation for a mock committee hearing on Thursday. Some topics for policy bills included death penalty costs, cell phone restrictions, gang violence, and abortion. Pages read their bills and “committee members,” governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. A “DO PASS” or “DO NOT PASS” recommendation was then voted upon, allowing a bill to continue on in the legislative process. As in the real political system, some bills died in committee.

Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/PageSchool>

This newsletter has been posted there.

Lawmakers ask for fee increase to curb gang violence

Olympia – House Bill 2314 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Ian Kinney and Maverick Ryan. “This bill addresses the issue of gang violence and will keep our communities safer,” said Rep. Kinney.

Last year, the six detectives currently working in the Seattle Police Gang Unit handled 102 cases, and this year they have already handled 60 cases. “Gang activity is steadily increasing,” said Rep. Ryan. Along with drive-by shootings and assaults, gangs traffic in marijuana, heroin, crystal meth, and prescription narcotics on Washington’s streets. This bill funds specialized gang task forces that will have the tools necessary to deal with drug trafficking and violent crimes. It will also fund youth outreach programs to prevent further expansion of gangs through recruitment of younger children. “Money to pay for the programs will come from a one dollar increase in fees for all traffic citations,” said Rep. Ryan.



Snooze button hit one more time



Olympia – House Bill 2000 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Kyle Frolander, Ryan Eriksen, and Michael Chernenko. “This bill addresses the issue of

teen sleep deprivation and will help high school students become healthier and find greater academic success,” said Rep. Frolander. Sixty percent of children under the age of 18 complain of being tired throughout the day and 15 percent reported that they fell asleep at school during the year. Teens who don’t get the required nine hours of sleep per night have worse grades, poorer attendance, more depression, and irritability. “All of these factors contribute to adolescents dropping out of school and lead to difficulty in finding employment in later life,” said Rep. Chernenko. This bill proposes that all schools with grades 7-12 begin the school day no earlier than 8:15 a.m. “The new start time better fits a teen’s natural biological clock and makes a more productive, rested student,” said Rep. Eriksen.

The problem: No dam fish!

Olympia – Senate Bill 7024 was introduced yesterday by Senator Raymond Aaron Porter. “This bill addresses the absence of migratory salmon in the state and will reestablish their population upstream of Grand Coulee Dam,” said Sen. Porter. When the dam was erected in the 1930s, it cut off 85 percent of sock-

eye habitat on the Columbia. In 1994, \$53 million was paid in a settlement to the Colville Tribe when their tribal land was flooded by the backwaters of the dam and the salmon, a large portion of their food supply, was eliminated. This bill will establish a committee to investigate the feasibility of constructing and maintaining a fish ladder on Grand Coulee Dam. “Five problems that prevented the dam from having a fish ladder constructed originally will have to be solved by this committee. Hopefully, then we can move forward with the construction,” said Sen. Porter.



Cut-off week brings bill process closer to an end

This week bills were voted out of fiscal committees on Monday as they continued through the lawmaking process. Transportation, Ways and Means, Capital Budget and several Appropriations and Oversight committees met for the last time to decide what funding would look like for many state programs and new legislation. On Friday, floor action on bills from the opposite house ended at 5 p.m. Pages got a first-hand look at how parliamentary procedure is used by lawmakers on the floor of each chamber as they considered remaining bills. Hundreds of bills have been introduced in the two chambers this session, but only about 15-20 percent will actually become laws. Pages were busy on the floors of both the House and the Senate, delivering documents, listening to their legislators express their views and watching the voting process. House and Senate members have only one more week to amend and pass legislation. Bills which are passed in their final form will be sent to the Governor for her signature by the session’s end on March 8.

Uninsured children get the medical attention they need

Olympia – Senate Bill 7111 was introduced yesterday by Senators Nathan Williams and Bryan Funk. “This bill addresses the issue of uninsured children and will provide the medical attention they need,” said Sen. Funk. Presently there are 9.4 million uninsured children nationally; 73,000 of those children are in Washington right now. “Our plan is to encourage restaurant owners to donate their food to local food banks in exchange for a tax rebate of up to \$2,500 per year which will be donated in the restaurant’s name to Apple Health for Kids. The extra money will provide more children who live in poverty with medical insurance. “It costs taxpayers a lot of money if a child without insurance goes to a hospital for treatment rather than going to a doctor when the child has insurance,” said Sen. Williams.



Where's the dignity?

Olympia – Senate Bill 6756 was introduced yesterday by Senator Ellie Lewis. “This bill addresses the issue of the Death with Dignity Act and will no longer allow doctors to assist patients in dying,” said Sen. Lewis. Patients

often feel pressured to choose the option of assisted suicide, according to the legislator. In Oregon a terminally ill patient was seeking an expensive, experimental chemotherapy treatment, but her medical insurance company denied the request. They would, however, pay for an overdose of drugs prescribed by her doctor. Another problem with the current law is that the Washington State Department of Health restricts doctors from using any language on death certificates indicating that the Death with Dignity Act was used. “This means that doctors are essentially falsify the death certificates,” said Sen. Lewis. “Doctors and patients should focus on healing rather than feeling pressure to end a life,” she said. This bill proposes to repeal the Death With Dignity Act.



Senators hang up the cell phone law



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Will McInnis, Victoria Mount, and Alexander Ludeman introduced Senate Bill 5126, which addresses the issue of the cell phone law. “The bill is a

good one because it will eliminate an ineffective statute,” said Sen. McInnis. The Institute of Highway Loss Data has found that laws banning the use of cell phones behind the wheel have not led to fewer crashes. Only 9 percent of crashes involve talking on a cellphone. This bill proposes to repeal the existing law. “Repealing this law will save money and time. While some states have talked about banning cell phone use, only eight of 50 states have enacted this law,” said Sen. Ludeman.

Lawmakers say capital punishment too costly

Olympia – House Bill 1691 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Patrick Charlton and Ben Rolland. “This bill addresses costs of capital punishment and will reduce the amount of money spent on trials and executions,” said Rep. Rolland. Death Row in Washington State has seven prisoners housed there; one has been an inmate for 21 years. “The reason why the death penalty costs so much is not because of the actual execu-

tion, but because of the many appeals and years in solitary confinement,” said Rep. Charlton. A trial for death penalty lasts four times longer than other cases and there are many appeals that take years to prepare for. House Bill 1691 will reduce the number of people on death row. “This will save millions of dollars because life in prison without parole is actually cheaper than capital punishment, with an average death penalty trial costing an estimated \$2 million, twice as much as 50 years of life without parole,” said Rep. Charlton.



Dropping out becomes more difficult

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Julia Troy and Juliana da Cruz introduced House Bill 2846, which addresses the issue of high school dropouts. “The bill is a good one because it will keep more of our students in school,” said Rep. Troy. Nearly 1.2 million young people a year—about 7,000 every school day—are dropping out without the necessary skills to get and keep a good job, according to the lawmakers. “An unskilled student, or one who is not properly educated, cannot contribute to the economy; the students who drop out each year result in \$320 billion in lost wages, taxes, and productivity,” said Rep. da Cruz. This bill will create more difficult procedures for students who want to leave school. In addition to filling out paperwork, students must participate in a parent-administrator conference and meet with a teacher, doctor and counselor. “It is possible that there may be a medical reason for the student’s inability to function well at school, so a doctor could help,” said Rep. Troy. The representatives calculate that the cost to keep students in school will pay for itself in the long run.



Competitive edge results in Jeopardy win

On Friday pages tested their knowledge of the Legislative process in a spirited game of Jeopardy. Winning teams were awarded certificates and brightly colored stickers that they wore proudly for the rest of the day.

Watch us live at **TVW.org**

Senators set higher standards for high school athletes



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Haley Risley, Rachael Price, and Morgan Anderson introduced Senate Bill 6789, which

addresses the issue of high school sports eligibility. “The bill is a good one because it will prepare students to succeed later on in college and in future careers,” said Sen. Risley. Currently, school districts have to follow the WIAA standards which require all students to have passing grades in all their classes except for one. If they want to set higher standard as a district, they can. “Some athletes can play with GPAs as low as .75 while in other districts they may be prevented from playing unless they have at least a 2.5 GPA,” said Sen. Price. This bill proposes to set a minimum GPA for all athletes at a “C” average or a 2.0 GPA. No failing grades will be allowed in order to play. “High schools are suppose to prepare students for the real world. Allowing athletes to play on teams when they are just barely making the grade academically sets them up for failure beyond school. A great basketball player with a 1.0 GPA isn’t even going to get into college, so then where is his talent going to take him?” said Sen. Anderson.

Putting a stop to cell phone-related accidents

Olympia – House Bill 1001 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Hudson Coulombe and Desmond Thorpe. “This bill addresses the issue of cell phones and will put an end to injuries and deaths caused by this distraction,” said Rep. Coulombe. Studies show that talking on a cell phone makes someone as unaware as having a .08 blood alcohol level, the level for conviction of drunk driving. The risk of getting in an accident is four times greater if someone is talking on a cell phone. There are 1.2 million car crashes a year, and 21 percent involve cell phone conversations. This bill intends to raise the fine for violating the law from \$124 to \$250 and will require one day of jail time for offenders. “This will make the public more aware of how dangerous the habit is and will make them think twice about using the phone,” said Rep. Thorpe.



Bill caps tuition for colleges



Olympia – Senate Bill 7998 was introduced yesterday by Senators Josiah Sakas and Robbie Maiava. “This bill addresses the issue of college tuition costs and will enable more students to have access to higher education,” said Sen. Sakas. In the last year, \$500 million in support for state colleges and universi-

ties was cut from the budget. Over the last few years, after caps were removed on increases in tuition, the Washington State University’s tuition increased by 57 percent; the University of Washington’s increased by 66 percent. If this bill becomes law, the legislature will go back to capping the percentage of increases that institutions can charge for tuition. “Keeping the rising costs to a maximum of 5 percent a year will prevent high student loans and student debt and keep our schools some of the most competitive in the country,” said Sen. Maiava.

Snooze longer, study more effectively

Olympia – House Bill 1234 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Katie Kelly and Anna Estabrook. “This bill addresses the issue of teen sleep deprivation and will increase the educational success



rate of high school students,” said Rep. Kelly. Sleep affects every part of one’s life, including health, safety, mood, learning, appearance, relationships and productivity, according to the legislators. The recommended amount of sleep for a teenager is about 9 hours, but 85 percent of teens let less than 8.5 hours each night. This bill will require public high schools to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. “After the Minneapolis School District changed their start times from 7:15 to 8 a.m., they found improvement in attendance and enrollment rates, increased daytime alertness and decreased student-reported depression,” said Rep. Estabrook.

Page program over 120 years old

The Legislative page program has been in existence since 1891. This photo is of pages who served in past years. The first female page served in 1937. In the past, pages were required to do ironing and cleaning for members. Page duties today are much more professional and include delivering campus correspondence, helping with mailings in legislative offices, and handing out documents on the floor of the Senate and House.

While adults smoke, kids choke

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Theresa Foley, Alexandra Harris and Lian Eytinge introduced Senate Bill 5023, which addresses the issue of second-hand smoking in vehicles. “The bill is a good one because it protects vulnerable children from the deteriorating effects of second-hand smoke,” said Sen. Eytinge. The CDC considers cigarette smoking the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, accounting for approximately one out of every five deaths in the United States each year, or about 438,000 people. Children are even more at risk than adults from second-hand smoke. Toxins from cigarettes are 30 times higher in the backseat of a car when someone is smoking than the level at which an unhealthy air alert is triggered. Inhaling the small particles in smoke can adversely affect the development of children’s lungs and can lead to lung disease, ear infections and even an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome. This bill proposes to ban all persons inside a vehicle from smoking. Violators will be fined \$123.



Education is key to plastic bag pollution, according to senators



Olympia – Senate Bill 7997 was introduced yesterday by Senators Danielle Carnahan and Brynna Gregg. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bags pollution and will help educate the citizens to create a more eco-friendly environment,” said Sen. Carnahan. Plastic bags used in grocery and retail stores use up natural resources during their manufacturing, create litter, add to landfill waste and choke marine life that mistake decomposing plastic as food. “Plastic bags are killing our environment, and are so abundant in Africa that they are jokingly called the national flower,” said Sen. Gregg. While bans may work in some places, she argues, they are mostly ineffective and make many people mad. “Public education will have a much greater influence on the people of our state,” she said. To that end, the bill co-sponsor explains that the legislation will tax plastic bags used in all grocery and retail stores, and the money will be used to fund public education campaigns about littering and recycling. “Stores where the bags are used will have other sources of income from the reusable totes they will be required to provide at a low cost,” said Sen. Carnahan. “Through the education campaign consumers will learn to bring their reusable bags and they will be more aware of their impact on the environment,” she said.

Lawmakers seek to repeal Death with Dignity Act

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Nina Klein, Wyatt Mires, and Miles Robertson introduced House Bill 2761, which addresses the Death with Dignity Act. “The bill is a good one because it allows the hope of a recovery, and promotes family unity prior to and after the death of a terminally ill patient,” said Rep. Klein. The bill would repeal the law which was created through citizen initiative a few years ago. Currently, the Death with Dignity Act not only allows assisted suicide, but also requires the doctor to lie on the patient’s death certificate. “They must rule the cause of death as ‘natural’ and cannot list it as an assisted suicide,” said Rep. Mires. According to the legislators, there have been accounts of beneficiaries taking advantage of terminally ill patients, encouraging them to go through the process so they could benefit from inheritances. “We want to promote the role of physicians as healers, while supporting families in their time of sadness,” said Rep. Robertson.



Senators make A’s out of Zzz’s

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Spencer Davis, Katherine Dinnison and Rachel Foley introduced Senate Bill 5273, which addresses the issue of teenage sleep deprivation. “The bill is a good one because it will improve high school attendance as well as allow teenagers to get the sleep they need so they can be more successful academically,” said Sen. Foley. Nearly 85 percent of teens report that they get less than the 8.5 hours of sleep they need for a productive school day, and 15 percent report that they fall asleep in school. Scientists explain that the biological changes in a teenager’s body conflict with the early start times of most public high schools. “Teens are wired to go to bed later and get up later, but most high school start before 7:30 a.m.,” said Sen. Davis. This bill will require all public high schools to start no earlier than 8:45 a.m. “Where this has been tried, such as in the Minneapolis School District, there have been noticeable improvements in attendance and daytime alertness, as well as a decrease in student-reported depression,” said Sen. Dinnison.





Guest speakers visit Page School

Supreme Court Justices Debra Stephens and Susan Owens; Policy Analyst Becca Kenna-Schenk, and Rep. Hans Zeiger (R-Puyallup) joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. Each spoke about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information in regard to their contribution to state government. Pages were able to interact with the guests, asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speakers' questions.



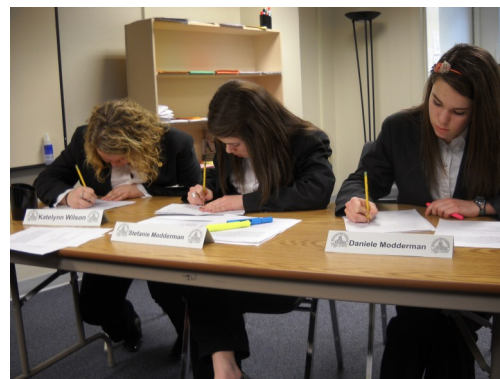
Liberal abortion policy challenged

Olympia—Yesterday, Representatives Courtney Berger, Megan Holmberg, and Cassidy Matson introduced House Bill 3333, which addresses the issue of abortion in the state. “The bill is a good one because it will help save thousands of lives that are lost through this horrendous procedure,” said Rep. Berger. Approximately 86,000 women younger than 18 received abortions in the U.S. in 2002. Currently Washington does not require a young girl under the age of 18 to notify or get approval from a parent to have an abortion. “At least 34 states require some form of parent involvement in the decision,” said Rep.

Matson. This bill will require that parents be notified of the choice their daughter is making and will require the state to provide counseling for the mother and family to help them through the process, as well as encourage anti-abortion organizations to help provide money for the continuation of a pregnancy and adoption of the child after it is born.



Kids are not adults



Olympia – House Bill 3579 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Danielle Modderman, Stefanie Modderman and Katelynn Wilson. “This bill addresses the issue of the juvenile justice system

and will reduce the number of adolescents being put in adult prisons,” said Rep. D. Modderman. Charging juveniles as adults and putting them in adult prisons is a punishment that is too harsh, according to the lawmakers. “This practice yields substantially higher rates of later serious crimes compared to youths handled by the juvenile system,” said Rep. Wilson. Adult prisons focus on punishment, while juvenile detention centers focus on rehabilitation. If the bill becomes law, no child under the age of 16 will be tried as an adult. Juveniles sentenced to long periods of jail time will remain in the detention center until they reach the age of 18 and then will be transferred to the adult prison system to serve the rest of their time.

